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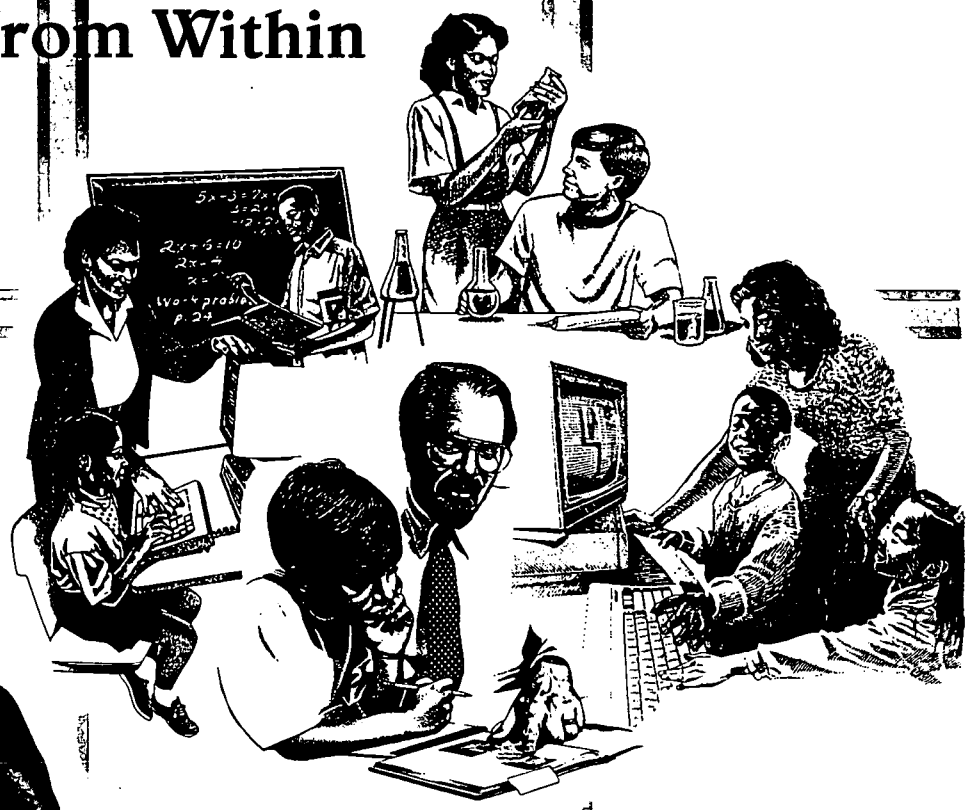
ABSTRACT

This is the third publication in a series of three reports that summarize the results of Ohio's Javits Project, a 3-year federally sponsored program to improve the identification of and services to young economically disadvantaged gifted children in 25 Ohio schools. This report provides information about the successes of the project teams in improving identification and service delivery practices. The overrepresentation and underrepresentation of ethnic groups in traditional gifted programs are discussed. The benefits to providing gifted services in the regular classroom, including teacher collaboration and challenges for all students, are highlighted. Noted are the move away from traditional gifted identification methods to a more inclusive multifactored identification process, and the effects of this change as seen in the ethnic composition of identified gifted students before and after the program. Positive transformative learning experiences of participating teachers and the resulting provision of differentiated instruction to gifted students are described. A graph shows the academic and social growth of participating students. Best practices in differentiating instruction to meet individual learner needs include are identified. Appendices include an Ohio Javits Grant abstract and a list of participating buildings and sites. (Contains 20 references.) (CR)

Windows of Opportunity

Changes from Within



Ohio's Comprehensive Inservice Training Project for the Identification of and Provision of Services to Young Gifted Children Who Are Economically Disadvantaged

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April 1996

CONTENTS

Artwork by Colonial Hills Elementary School (Worthington City) students.

State of Ohio
Department of Education
Ohio Departments Building, Room 810, 65 South Front Street, Columbus 43215-4183

John M. Goff
Superintendent of Public Instruction

April 1996

Dear Colleagues:

As educators, our goal is to provide rich learning opportunities that make the most effective use of the instructional time available to *all* of Ohio's school children. Meeting this challenge requires a strong combination of committed and qualified teachers, relevant curriculum, meaningful support services, and nurturing environments, all designed to ensure the academic, social, and physical development of each child entrusted to our care. The active involvement of families and community members is equally important in maximizing this *window of opportunity* that is each child's school career.

We are all aware of the barriers — attitudinal and fiscal — that can impede on the delivery of appropriate services to children. Compounding these barriers for gifted youngsters is the fact that kindergarten-through-grade three children, especially those in difficult economic situations, are typically underserved in gifted programs across the nation. There is a desperate need to develop methods that not only recognize the potential of each child, but also lead to the differentiation and individualization of instruction to meet each child's educational needs.

Ohio's Comprehensive Inservice Training Program for the Identification of and Provision of Services to Young Gifted Children Who Are Economically Disadvantaged — Ohio's Javits Project — offers a viable model for meeting the critical needs of a frequently overlooked population of children.

Windows of Opportunity: Changes from Within is the third and final publication resulting from Ohio's Javits Project. This three-year project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, represented a concerted effort to meet the needs of gifted learners who are too often overlooked in the educational setting.

As we look ahead to the challenges of a new century, our mission will be to ensure that public education in Ohio represents, at a minimum, a *window of opportunity* in the lives of all Ohio children and their families.

Sincerely,

John Goff
Superintendent of Public Instruction

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success of Ohio's Javits Project is attributable to the parents, teachers, coordinators, administrators, and community members who worked for three years to improve identification methods and teaching strategies for serving gifted youngsters in the regular classroom.

Special thanks are extended to Patricia Shepard, gifted coordinator for Akron City Schools; Rose Oliver Jenkins, principal of South Avondale Elementary School in Cincinnati; George Grim, gifted coordinator for Federal Hocking elementary schools; Tracy Jageman, gifted coordinator, Southeastern Ohio Special Education Regional Resource Center; Rita Mazurek, gifted coordinator in Toledo City Schools; and Maria Pappas, gifted coordinator for Youngstown City Schools, for their assistance in making this Project a success. In addition to their regular duties, they served on building teams and the Javits Project Advisory Team, and coordinated activities across project buildings.

A special thanks is also extended to Dr. Thomas M. Stephens, professor emeritus of the College of Education at The Ohio State University and Executive Director of the School Study Council of Ohio, and Dr. Joan Wolf, associate professor of gifted education at the University of Utah.

Their expertise in the area of gifted education and their commitment to the Javits Project were invaluable in meeting project goals and objectives.

Lastly, the efforts of Martha Scherpelz, who assisted in gathering material from project sites and in conceptualizing the Javits Project activities as "windows of opportunity" are appreciated.

PREFACE

Whether one looks at business, industry, nonprofit organizations, government, or education, the view is of ongoing change. Systems thinking, lifelong learning, continuous improvement, and total quality management are all attempts at humanizing organizations, while maximizing their performance.

The emphasis on participatory processes, accentuating diversity, and being inclusive of all ideas and approaches characterizes such organizational change initiatives. The models that we develop today are not static. Instead, they change and adapt to the environments in which they operate.

Ohio is working to promote continuous improvement in teaching and learning to ensure that students leave Ohio schools with the academic and vocational skills needed for lifelong learning and success.

The guiding principles that underlie this call for improvement in Ohio's education system are reflected in the following State Board of Education beliefs and commitments:

- All students can learn, and all students *will* learn if the conditions for learning are right.
- We hold high expectations for *all* students.
- A quality education is the responsibility of students, families, teachers, administrators, support personnel, and school boards working in partnership with individuals and organizations in the local community for the benefit of all.
- Public education must be relevant and prepare students to excel in a technological, information-based society.

- Public education will improve and be accountable for communicating progress in clear terms with the public.
- We must lead a long-term effort for positive change and encourage creative educational alternatives to increase student achievement.
- We must develop proactive positions and target priorities and resources to accomplish both our vision and mission.

If all students *can* learn, why aren't all students succeeding in our schools? An awareness of the factors that impact on learning — learning and teaching style, cultural differences, multiple intelligences, ability level, readiness skills, pace of learning, student interests, and the availability of resources — leads to the realization that one curriculum or method of instruction cannot meet the needs of all children. Our task is to design and adapt curriculum and instruction to meet the individual needs of each youngster as he or she changes and grows.

Ohio's Javits Project embraced the beliefs outlined above, both in its design and in its implementation, by focusing on two traditionally underserved groups of children in gifted education — those who are young *and* economically disadvantaged. The need for alternative methods of identification, and the need to provide a full range of services to meet students' needs, have been documented by Ohio research and demonstration/model projects.[1]

The *Windows of Opportunity* series explores the roles that teachers, administrators, families, and students played in improving learning opportunities for all children. Participation, partnership, involvement, and awareness are the watchwords that characterize Ohio's Javits Project.

Laying the Foundation

The first publication in the series, *Windows of Opportunity: Laying the Foundation,* addresses the conditions that allowed for continuous improvement in teaching and learning to occur. Administrative tasks, such as selecting project sites, recruiting building teams, creating an advisory team, and conducting a needs assessment, are described.

Teaming for Learning

Windows of Opportunity: Teaming for Learning — the second in the series — details the processes used by project teams to create a shared vision for improving student performance, the professional development provided to project teams to support them in their efforts to identify and serve gifted youngsters, and the strategies used to "institutionalize" these changes.

Changes from Within

The final document in the series, *Windows of Opportunity: Changes from Within,* shares information about the successes of the project teams in improving identification and service delivery practices. Best practices in differentiating instruction to meet individual learner needs are provided.

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[1] *Navigating the Waters of Change.* (Columbus: Ohio Department of Education, 1996), p. 25.

List of Tables and Figures

Tables

Figures

INTRODUCTION

Between October 1, 1992 and September 30, 1995, the U.S. Department of Education provided funding to the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Special Education, to improve identification of and services to young (K-3) gifted children who were economically disadvantaged.

Windows of Opportunity: Changes from Within, is the third and final publication in the *Windows of Opportunity* series. It will deal with the accomplishments of teachers and parents in developing alternative methods for identifying and serving gifted students in the regular classroom.

Terms such as underidentified and underserved are used to describe populations of children who are typically absent from gifted programs. Preschool, primary-age children, underachieving children, economically disadvantaged children, children from diverse cultures, minority children, and adolescent females are not identified by traditional identification methods (Shaklee & Hansford, 1992).

The traditional assessment procedures and measurements used under current state rules for the identification of gifted youngsters are biased in favor of students whose cognitive style is analytical rather than global (Young & Fouts, 1993). Complicating the identification process is the monolithic view of giftedness as a single construct. The work of Sternberg (1990) cautions against a single construct of giftedness and advocates for a multiplicity of constructs.

Ohio's Javits Project was designed to empower parents and regular classroom teachers, encouraging them to take a greater role in the development of strategies for meeting the needs of gifted and talented children (see Appendix A for grant abstract).

In keeping with this philosophy, each building team was supported in their efforts to design a model for meeting their individual building needs. There was no attempt to impose one model on all 25 project sites. Accordingly, the Ohio Department of Education facilitated the development of local models that could become an ongoing component of the district's plan for meeting the educational needs of gifted and talented students.

The information presented in this publication was derived from a needs assessment conducted in 1993, final assessment reports completed by buildings in 1995, and case studies completed by parents and school personnel at the end of the 1994-95 school year. All information is based on self-report data and does not purport to capture all of the activities or achievements of the building teams.

Although 25 buildings participated in Ohio's Javits Project, information from needs assessment and final assessment reports was gathered from 20 buildings. Similarly, case study information was collected from 21 buildings. One school closure at the end of the 1994-95 school year, and numerous personnel changes over the life of the Project, contributed to the inability of five buildings to submit data.

Student Population Profile

Student enrollment data were collected for 20 buildings. A total of 10,201 students were involved at the start of the Project in 1993. By the end of the Project in 1995, total enrollment had dropped to 9,259. Similarly, the enrollment for the targeted grades of K-3 was 6,262 in 1993 and 5,594 in 1995. Total enrollment declined by 9%, while enrollment in grades K-3 declined by 11%, indicating the high rate of mobility that existed in project buildings.

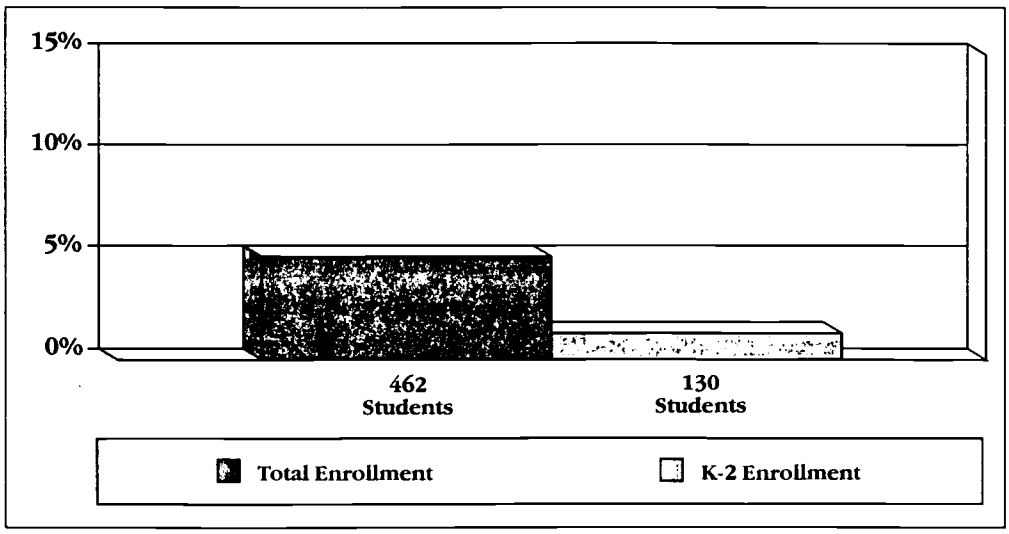
Table 1: Student Enrollment

Year	Total Enrollment	K-3 Enrollment
1993	10,201	6,262
1995	9,259	5,594

Each school district in Ohio is required to identify the number of students who are identified as gifted under Ohio's current *Rule for School Foundation Units for Gifted Children* (Ohio Department of Education, 1984). Of the four categories of giftedness recognized in Ohio — superior cognitive ability, specific academic ability, creative thinking ability, and visual and/or performing arts ability — standardized test scores are used to identify students as gifted in all but the category of visual and/or performing arts.

The total number of students from project buildings identified in 1993 as gifted under the current rule was 462. One hundred and thirty (130) of these youngsters were enrolled in kindergarten, or in grades one or two.

Figure 1: Percentage of Students Identified as Gifted in 1993



It is not surprising that fewer students were identified as gifted in grades K-2. Gifted identification in many schools does not occur until students are in the third grade because gifted services in many schools are not provided until students reach the fourth grade. This delay in identification contributes to the underidentification and inadequate delivery of services to young gifted children.

Children from minority groups represent another underrepresented population in gifted education programs. Four out of five of the Javits Project sites were located in urban areas with large African American populations. Two of the sites — Toledo and Youngstown — also had large Hispanic populations

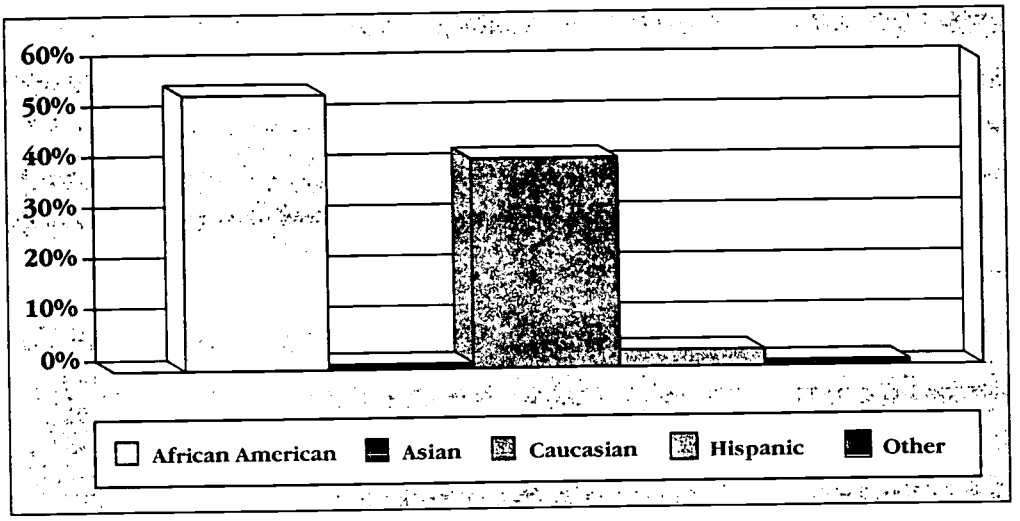
The ethnic composition of students enrolled in the 20 Javits buildings from which data were collected is illustrated in Table 2 and Figure 2. The number of Hispanic students reported is not representative of the true number of Hispanic children involved in the Project because several building reports that were not received were from sites with a large Hispanic population.

Clearly, the largest populations of students were African American and Caucasian.

Table 2: Ethnic Composition of 1993 Student Enrollment

African American	5,450
Asian	49
Caucasian	4,493
Hispanic	228
Other	53

Figure 2: Ethnic Composition of Students Enrolled in Project Buildings in 1993

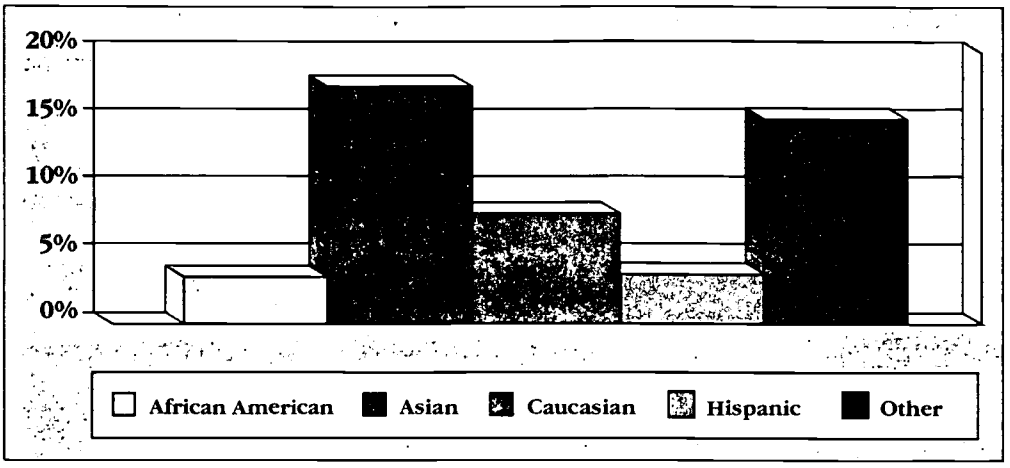


The ethnic breakdown of children identified as gifted in 1993 was also examined. Table 3 and Figure 3 indicate that while some ethnic groups are overrepresented in the population of students identified as gifted, others are underrepresented when compared to the size of the total population.

Table 3: Ethnic Composition of Students Identified as Gifted in 1993

African American	170
Asian	9
Caucasian	266
Hispanic	9
Other	8

Figure 3: Percentage of Students Identified as Gifted in 1993 by Ethnic Composition



African Americans are underidentified and underrepresented in gifted education programs on a nationwide basis. Traditional methods of identification such as standardized tests have been characterized as racist, elitist, and sexist (Nielson, 1994). The focus of the federally funded Javits projects has been on the development of methods of identification that recognize diversity and are more inclusive in identifying giftedness.

Gender also affects the identification of giftedness. Stereotypes of mathematical or scientific abilities of females may result in young girls having less experience with math and science toys, kits, and books than boys. As a result, they may have less experience with activities centering around mathematical or visual/spatial abilities, which may lead to poor performance on standardized tests used for identification purposes (Jacobs & Weisz, 1994).

Traditionally, there are fewer female adolescent students identified as gifted, particularly in the academic areas of math and science. Enrollment in advanced math and science classes is also heavily male. In Ohio's Javits Project buildings, females comprised 50% of the total enrollment, with 224 girls and 225 boys identified as gifted at the beginning of the Project.

The target population for this grant was young (K-3) students who were economically disadvantaged. The measure used to determine economic disadvantage was participation in the free and reduced lunch program. Buildings were selected that had a high student participation rate — usually over 70% — in the free and reduced lunch program. At the beginning of the Project, 187 identified gifted students were participating in their school's free and reduced lunch program.

Emerging Awareness

In Ohio, gifted education services are usually provided in a resource room or self-contained classroom. This has contributed to the low level of communication in some schools between teachers of gifted students and regular classroom teachers. Ohio's model projects and research and demonstration grants demonstrated the benefit of providing gifted services in the regular classroom as one option in a full range of services.[1]

[1] *Navigating the Waters of Change*, which describes the results of model and research and demonstration projects from 1991 to 1995, is available from the Division of Special Education, Ohio Department of Education.

Youngstown City Schools, which participated in the model projects in FY 1993-1995, is an example of one district that has taken major steps in adding the regular classroom to the full range of services for gifted youngsters. The district adopted policies that encouraged the use of alternative identification methods and a full range of services for meeting students' needs.

As a result of staff development and increased awareness of gifted education, an additional 378 children were identified and an additional 845 children were served. The number of teachers who received training in gifted education increased from seven in 1991 to 85 in 1993. Student participation in the *Odyssey of the Mind* program also increased by 84%, while the number of buildings participating in the program increased by 55% (Ohio Department of Education, 1996).

These achievements resulted from a firm commitment by the Youngstown Board of Education to be more inclusive and provide for greater collaboration and interaction between regular classroom teachers and gifted education teachers and coordinators.

Regular classroom teachers who participated in Ohio's Javits Project were asked to keep journals, recording the different strategies used in their classrooms and their reflections on the success or failure of their efforts. The following entries and others like them capture the excitement and enthusiasm of the teachers as they experimented with new approaches.

I'm definitely more aware of different learning styles when I plan my lessons and I have a renewed commitment toward providing enrichment for all of my students in several areas.

I probably would have never taken the Invention workshop if it wasn't for Javits. In the past it would not have appealed to me or it would've sounded almost scary! But because I'm more aware of teaching children to think at all levels, I took the inservice and taught the unit. It was fun....

As I look around my classroom today and reflect on this school year I realize that I have grown as a teacher. Children are working on "contracts." They have different projects to work on using a variety of materials and each child is working at his/her own ability.

The inservices reinforce what I believe about children and education. Each child has his/her own special talents and I must do everything possible to enrich the children and develop their talents.

I also observed within my classroom that when targeted "Javits" students were introduced and involved in an enrichment or challenging project, all students became interested and either automatically involved themselves or asked if they could join in. It became increasingly difficult for me to only present my lessons to the "Javits group" and not include others. So I began presenting the lessons as total class instruction and inviting all of my students. Each student had a desirable outcome based on their efforts and abilities.

Another helpful aspect for me as a Javits member was the opportunity I had to listen to guest speakers at Javits meetings this year and to collect and use their ideas in my classroom. These people were very creative and their enthusiasm was contagious. I've used and adapted many of their ideas in my classroom with excellent results. All students were involved, and conducting the activities in cooperative learning units enabled everyone to demonstrate their strengths.

One of the most rewarding outcomes of the Project was the confirmation by teachers that *all* students benefit from being challenged at their own individual ability and interest level.

As parents became more aware of the needs of gifted and talented students they formed parent groups. At the beginning of the Project, only one group existed among the 25 buildings. However, by the end of the Project, there were nine parent groups in operation.

As the Javits staff worked with building teams, it became evident that parents were concerned and advocated for the needs of *all* gifted children, not just their own children. In doing so, parents became a driving force, promoting the continuation of the Javits Project beyond the funding period and the expansion of project activities beyond the K-3 grade level.

As awareness increased, teams began to develop methods that recognized multiple constructs of giftedness, casting a larger "net" to include more diverse student populations than traditionally have been targeted under Ohio's current rule.

Identification of Gifted Students: Round Up the Usual Suspects

During the project needs assessment, which was conducted in 1993, several participating buildings had identified only one student as gifted (see *Windows of Opportunity: Laying the Foundation*). Yet, in talking to regular classroom teachers, project staff learned that other students in the same buildings were identified as having behaviors, vocabularies, emotions, creativity, leadership skills, or reasoning abilities that distinguished them from their peers.

Part of the problem in the identification of giftedness stems from the belief that there is a cluster of children who are "the truly gifted" and that they can be found if we use the right test or performance scales (Delisle, 1994). Delisle describes the term "truly gifted" as one of the ten statements that should never be made again by advocates of gifted children.

The "truly gifted" concept seems to be based on a single construct of giftedness, rather than the multiple constructs approach that is advocated by Sternberg (1990). Callahan (1996) suggests that gifted education has focused on *identifying* talent at the expense of *developing* talent. When we operate under the assumption that children come to school with talent waiting to be discovered, giftedness is thought of in terms of potential, rather than achievement.

Treffinger and Feldhusen (1996) support shifting the focus from defining, selecting, and serving the "gifted few" to identifying and developing the many talents and abilities in all students.

Margolin (1996) argues that gifted education can be viewed as the pedagogy of privilege — the training of the children of the affluent for leadership and dominance. Children from families whose socioeconomic status places them in the top 25% of the population are about five times more likely to be included in programs for the gifted than those from the bottom 25% (Borland, 1996).

Traditional identification methods result in white, middle/upper class students being identified as gifted — the "usual suspects." Clearly, there is a need for a more inclusive multifactored identification process.

"To conceive gifted students as the 'cognitive elite' leads to the undereducation of both those who are unfairly excluded from gifted programs and those who are included in gifted programs that provide extracurricular instruction instead of providing advanced academic work" (Pendarvis & Howley, 1996, p. 220).

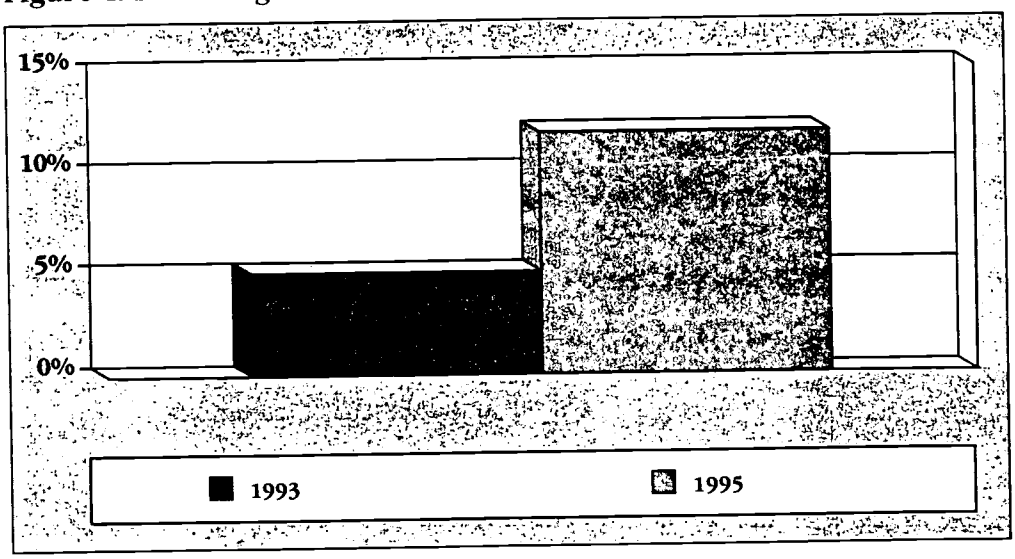
The classroom teachers participating in the Javits Project could readily identify students in their classroom who were high achievers or those who demonstrated ability beyond what was expected of children their age. The work of the Project's building team members was designed to surface this tacit knowledge and make it more explicit. Once team members were able to articulate this knowledge, they began to discuss giftedness and multiple intelligences, and how giftedness encompasses more than cognitive ability. The building teams examined existing material on alternative identification methods and constructed their own methods of identification.

All of the Javits Project buildings used a multifactored assessment process for identification purposes. Checklists and teacher observation were used by most buildings as a part of gifted identification. The second most prevalent method used was parent nomination. Four buildings used portfolio assessment and most of the buildings received training in constructing and using portfolios. However, many had not developed proficiency in using portfolios for identification purposes by the second year of the Project when they were required to identify students in preparation for project year three. It is anticipated that many of these buildings will incorporate portfolio assessment as they continue to improve their identification methods.

Recommendations of other professionals, early admission screening, classroom performance, and interview conferences were other methods used by the building teams for identification purposes.

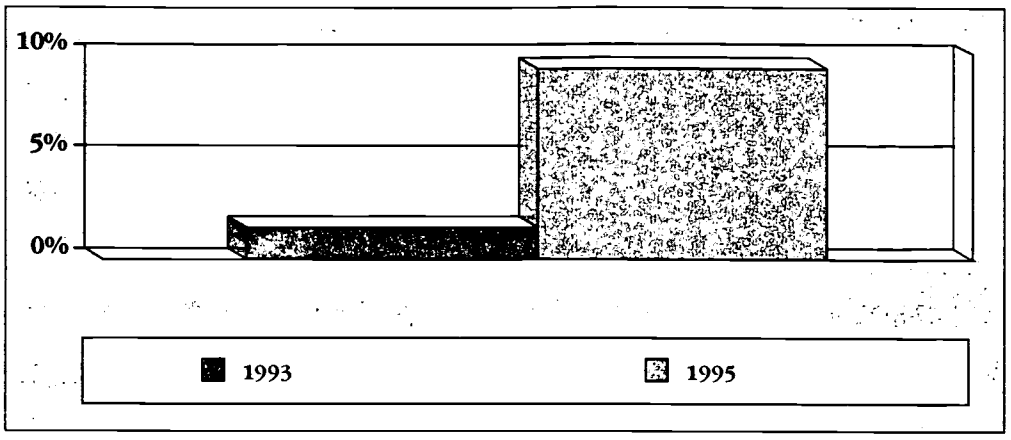
The results of these methods were impressive. The number of students identified as gifted in the 20 buildings reporting data increased from 462 in 1993 to 1,095 in 1995 (see Figure 4). More important than the overall increase in the number of students identified as gifted was the increase in diversity in the identified gifted population (see Table 4 and Figure 6). The number of students identified by the Javits Project as gifted in grades K-2 increased from 130 in 1993 to 494 in 1995.

Figure 4: Percentage of Students Identified as Gifted



As stated earlier, traditional gifted identification is often not conducted until the third grade because services are not normally provided until the fourth grade. There is concern that this delay in identification and the subsequent provision of services to young children hinders their development (Kitano, 1989; Karnes & Johnson, 1987).

Figure 5: Identified Gifted Students in Grades K-2



"When gifted underachievers have reached the middle grades, their underachievement is a genuine lifestyle...."

Gallagher, 1975

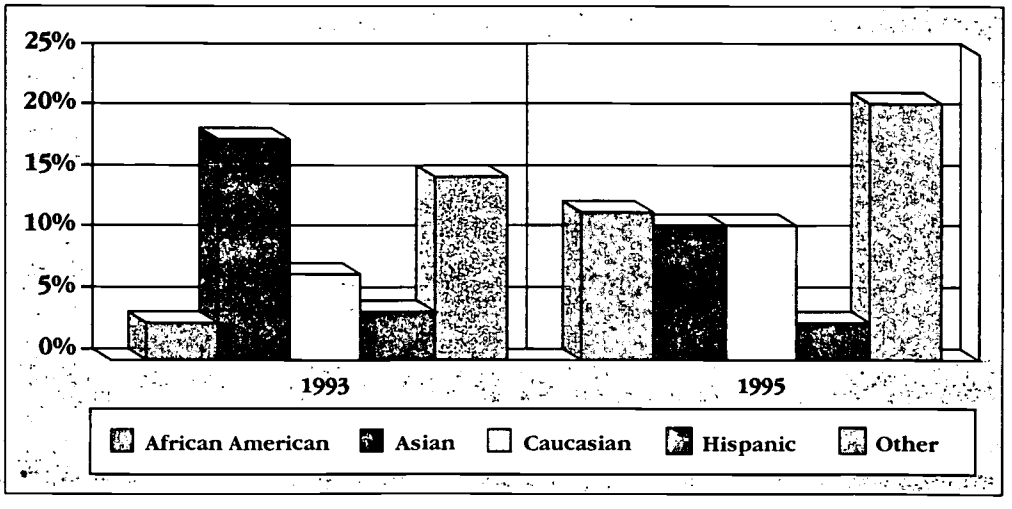
Three hundred and sixty-four additional children were identified as gifted and began to receive services while in kindergarten and grades one and two as a result of Ohio's Javits Project. These students have been given a head start on developing their talent because of the early identification efforts of their teachers and parents.

The identification methods used by the building teams also resulted in more diversity in the gifted population. In particular, larger numbers of African American students were identified as gifted.

Table 4: Ethnic Composition of Identified Gifted Students in 1993 and 1995

Ethnic Group	1993	1995
African American	170	655
Asian	9	6
Caucasian	266	424
Hispanic	9	7
Other	8	3

Figure 6: Percentage of Identified Gifted Students in 1993 and 1995 by Ethnic Composition

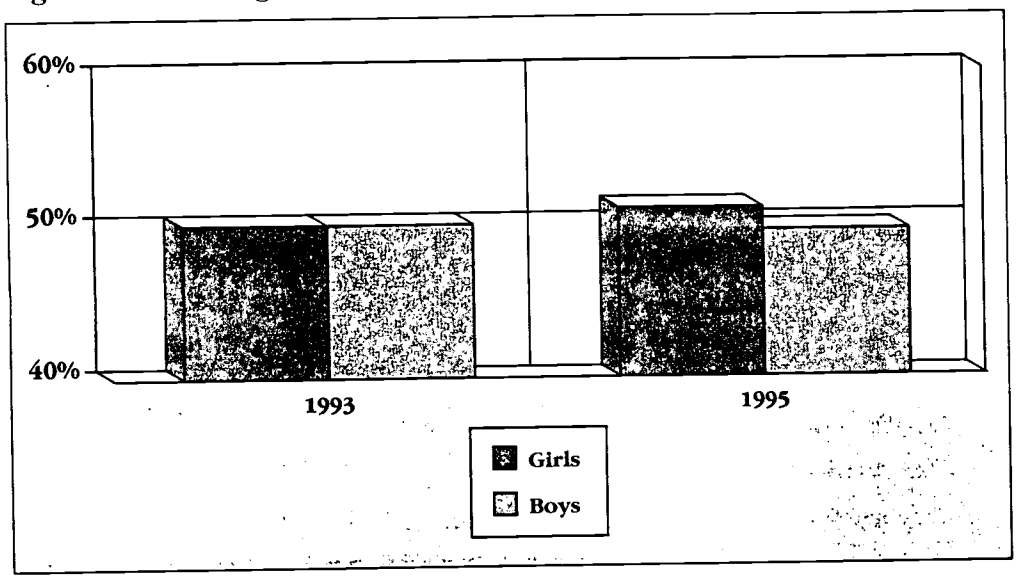


At the beginning of the project the gender of identified gifted students was evenly divided between boys and girls. However, by 1995, there was a slight increase in the percentage of girls identified as gifted compared to boys (see Table 5 and Figure 7).

Table 5: Number of Identified Gifted Students in 1993 and 1995 by Gender

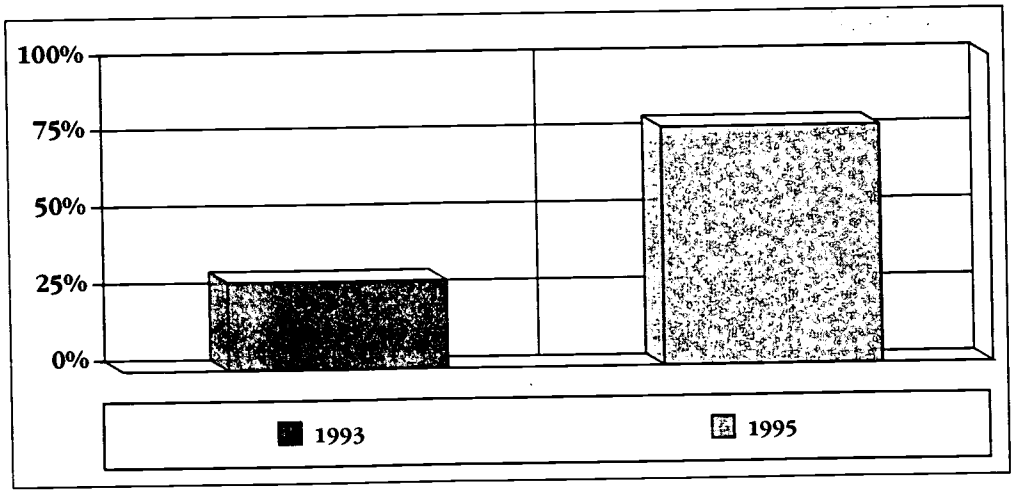
Gender	1993	1995
Girls	230	558
Boys	232	537

Figure 7: Percentage of Gifted Students by Gender



There was also a substantial increase in the percentage of identified gifted students participating in the free and reduced lunch program. This increase, however, should be viewed with caution because more participating buildings reported numbers in 1995 than in 1993.

Figure 8: Percentage of Gifted Students Participating in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program



Clearly, the building teams developed and used assessment methods that were more inclusive of the populations targeted through the Project, allowing more than just "the usual suspects" to be identified as gifted.

Transforming Our Teaching

Mezirow (1994, 1991), Cranston (1994), and Loughlin (1993) are working to develop and apply a theory of adult learning that is called *transformative learning*. Their work illustrates how individuals operate on uncritically accepted meaning perspectives acquired through socialization, schooling, and indoctrination. Usually there is some identifiable triggering circumstance or life experience that causes people to examine critically their meaning perspectives. When that happens, the validity of the existing meaning perspective is verified or transformed, thereby creating new meaning perspectives.

Based on journal entries and comments, many of the Project's participating teachers underwent a transformative learning experience with regard to how they viewed students and approached teaching. Consequently, these teachers began to experiment by replacing the "teach-to-the-middle" approach with differentiated instruction.

Differentiated instruction refers to a variety of instructional approaches that respond to a student's ability level, interest, readiness, and learning style. Javits Project teachers who began to differentiate instruction to meet individual learner needs reported that their approach became more child-centered and less teacher-centered, allowing youngsters to work at their own pace and follow their own interests, rather than moving through the textbook as a group.

The focus on meaning-making, rather than knowledge acquisition, recognizes that the experiences, knowledge, and interests that the student brings to the curriculum are as important as what the curriculum brings to the student. Content presented without regard to the students' current level of knowledge is analogous to teaching in a vacuum.

The following comments made by project teachers suggest a growing awareness of the value of individualizing instruction to meet each child's unique needs:

> *Josie (1st grade) set up an experiment totally on her own using the scientific process. What liquid will egg shells dissolve in quickest; water, vinegar or coke?*
>
> *Jessie (age 8) has set specific goals for herself and consistently works at reaching these goals.*

Educators are fond of talking about the "teachable moment." One teacher's journal entry reflected the impact of taking advantage of the teachable moment and following a student's interest.

> *I observed a student's interest in bears grow. I read a story to the class on bears. Afterwards Felica's face seemed to light up. She asked me what she should do to learn more about bears. I showed her several books and pictures of bears. I also introduced her to encyclopedias. After browsing through a few books, she decided to write some information on bears. Felica returned with three drawings and a paragraph on each of the bears. She read the information and expressed great pride and success. She smiled real wide and she said, "I did a lot of work today."*

Other teachers began to set up learning centers that allowed for students to learn at their own pace and to follow their interests. Teachers at Harris Elemen-

tary School in Akron City Schools developed a manual of available resources and strategies that could be used to differentiate instruction. The key to the effective use of learning centers is the emphasis on the learner as a "discoverer" of knowledge, rather than the teacher as a "giver" of knowledge.

Other teachers used learning contracts to differentiate instruction, allowing students to skip material that they have mastered and pursue learning activities that challenge their ability and interests. For example:

> *Joselyn — the poet and author — loves creating rhyming alphabet books, haiku, poems on every theme; even homework comes back rhyming. Books, books, and more books are created. She loves to extend books from those already read — her life as Cinderella, or the Ugly Joselyn just to name a few. Joselyn loves to contract ... she'll take a contract home to think/make plans for the next day's activities.*

Other methods used by teachers to differentiate instruction included enrichment, cross-grade coursework, special interest seminars, and acceleration. One example of cross-grade coursework involved a student by the name of Jazza.

> *Jazza is an eight-year-old student in third grade. He is an excellent reader. He is more advanced in reading in my class than the other students. His work is always excellent. Today he and I talked about him going to fourth grade for reading. He was very pleased with the idea. He assured me that he would continue to do good work.*

The teacher continued to monitor Jazza's progress in the fourth grade reading classroom.

> *Jazza was very excited to see how he did on his reading unit test and what grade he would receive on his report card. His grade finally came down before he went home. He received an "A" on the test and also an "A" in reading for the first grading period. Now he is sure he can keep up and do the work.*

Not all acceleration is as effective. Todd (3rd grade) is another student who was moved to a higher grade level for specific coursework.

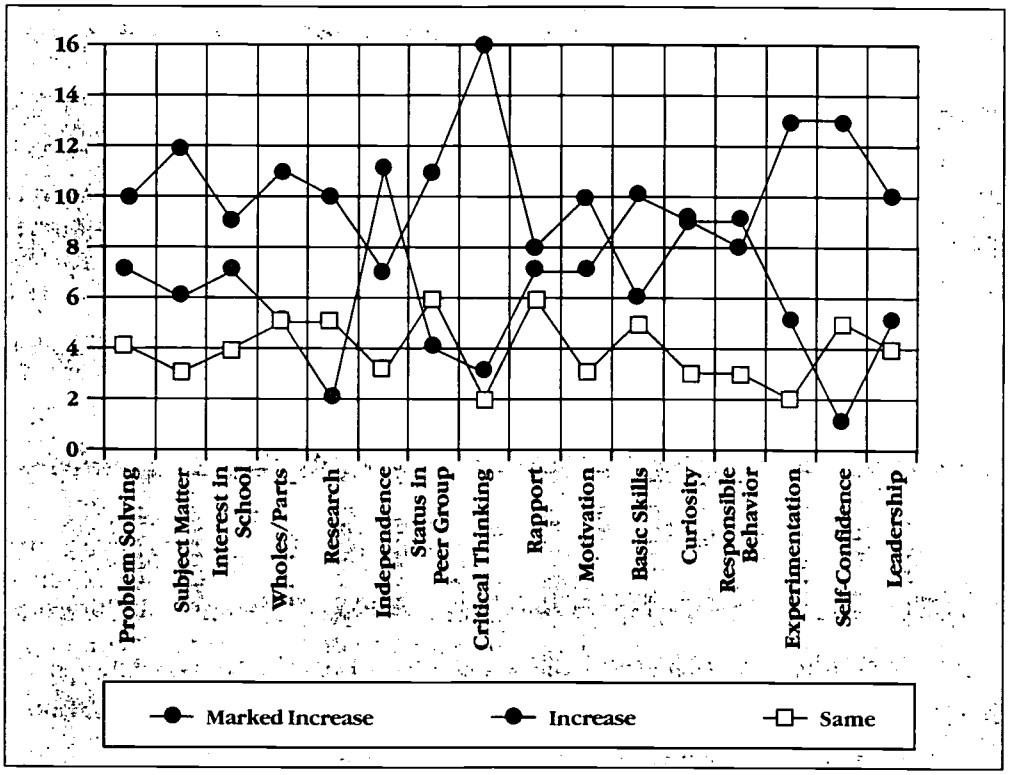
> *In September, when Todd began attending fifth-grade math and reading classes, he exhibited withdrawal and tension. I was aware of his behavior change and asked if he was fearful of the higher classes. He said "no," but his mother indicated some hesitancy about the fifth-grade level and Todd's reaction seemed to indicate he also had concerns. I had a conference with both the reading/math teachers and with Todd. We tried to assure Todd of our support and help, and asked him to have a trial period. We wanted to determine if he could adjust socially and academically to the fifth graders for those two periods. He agreed and so did his parents.*

The teacher stayed in contact with both Todd and his mother regarding his academic and emotional progress. Todd began to relax as he gained confidence and acceptance. The last entry in the teacher's journal read

> *Academic status: 3rd-grade Todd takes 5th-grade reading and math and makes A's in all subjects. He reads and does research on favorite topics after his assignments are completed.*

The progress of "Javits students" will be monitored for three years beyond the end of the Project. Teachers were asked to identify the extent of growth in academic and social skills that occurred in these students as they worked with them throughout the life of Ohio's Javits Project (see Figure 9). Eighteen of the students showed marked increases or increases in the areas of subject matter, independence, critical thinking, and curiosity. The area of research showed the least amount of growth with only 12 out of 21 students indicating a change in behavior.

Figure 9: Academic and Social Growth from 1993 to 1995



Seventy-five percent of the parents of the same 21 students reported increases in curiosity, experimentation, enjoyment of learning, ability to judge usefulness of facts, ability to find information, independence, critical thinking, knowledge of subject, self-confidence, and leadership as a result of participation in the Project.

Moving On

The funding for the Ohio's Javits Project officially ended on October 1, 1995; however the Project was granted a six-month extension to complete administrative and evaluation activities.

There was an enthusiastic response from building team members in support of Ohio's efforts to apply for a second three-year grant to continue Project activities. However, due to federal budget cuts, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement could fund only one project nationwide. The continuation of Ohio's efforts now depends on the work of the parents, teachers, administrators, and community representatives who were so integral to the success of the Javits Project.

All 25 buildings participated in planning for the continuation of project activities beyond the 1994-95 school year. Toledo City Schools has developed a strong working relationship with the University of Toledo and The Toledo Museum of Art. Workshops were conducted during the summer of 1995 by university staff to help teachers from the Toledo Javits schools provide challenging activities in the areas of art, music, and dance. Further integration of the arts into the curriculum is planned for the 1995-96 school year.

In the Youngstown City Schools, parents, teachers, and students who participated in the Javits Project were also involved in developing the strategic plan for the district. As a result of their success in increasing awareness of the Project and the benefits for those who participated, the district has plans to employ eight additional consultant teachers to work with regular classroom teachers on developing strategies for meeting the needs of gifted students in their classrooms. District personnel have also applied for additional grant monies using the Javits Project as a replicable model for providing ongoing professional development. The district has already received a Sister City Model Project Grant that builds upon the success of the Javits Project.

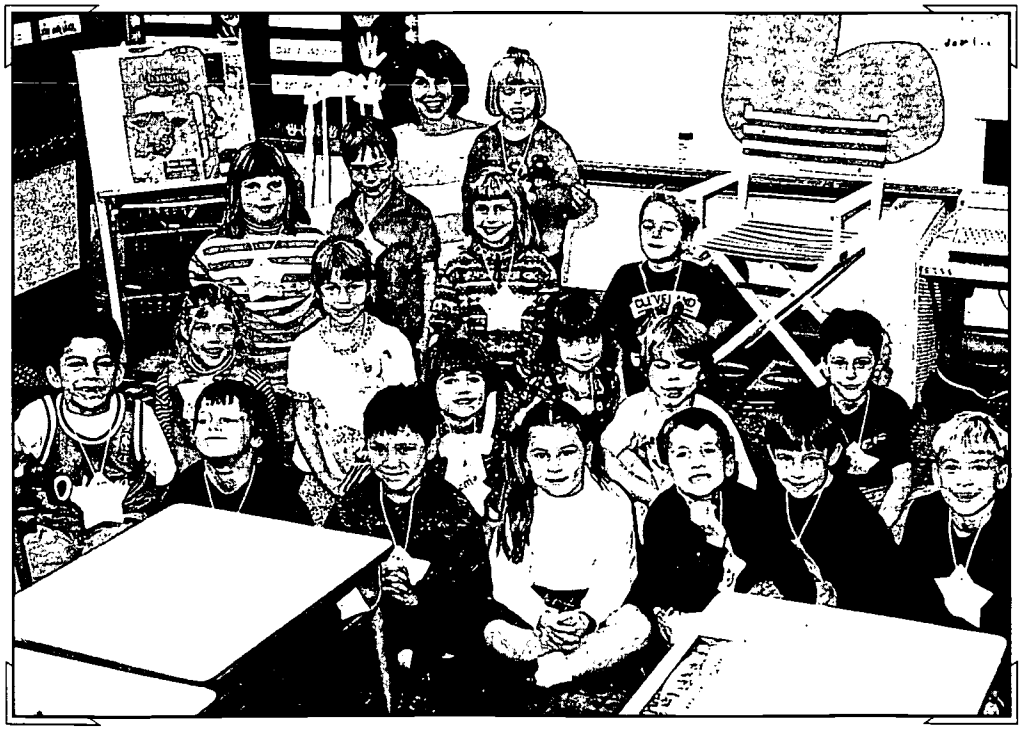
As a result of positive reaction on the part of participating teachers, Akron City Schools has included for the first time workshops on gifted education strategies as part of its districtwide professional development program. The district has also doubled the number of gifted coordinators and added additional gifted education teachers. The goal of the district is to allow for the expansion of Javits activities to other elementary schools within the district.

The positive efforts of Ohio's Javits Project will continue to be felt because of the ongoing collaboration of its stakeholders — the parents, teachers, administrators, and community members who developed effective methods for identifying and serving gifted youngsters. The Project's successes belong to the building teams and their partners. From their work, best practices can be gleaned that may help others to improve the performance of and recognize the gifts in all students.

Best Practices

- Be inclusive. Involve all stakeholders in planning, implementing, and evaluating activities.
- Develop ownership by stakeholders. The driving force to keep a project going beyond the funding period is the ownership felt by those involved.
- Think of giftedness as being comprised of multiple constructs, not just superior intelligence; it will lead to multifactored assessment.

- Utilize multifactored assessment rather than relying on traditional standardized test scores, to identify giftedness. It will result in a more diverse gifted student population.
- Begin to identify gifted children as soon as possible. Do not wait until the 3rd grade.
- Gather accurate data through site visits, as opposed to mailed surveys, at the beginning of your project.
- Provide opportunities for regular classroom teachers and teachers of gifted students to collaborate.
- Form partnerships with universities, businesses, and community organizations to maximize resources.
- Encourage the development of parent groups. Parents are the strongest advocates for gifted students and can operate without the constraints of existing district policies.
- Look for ways to develop giftedness and be more inclusive. Achievement and performance, as well as potential, should be considered. Avoid using the term "truly gifted," which suggests exclusivity and elitism.
- Differentiate instruction to meet the individual needs of students.
- Build on student experience and interest as a means to further learning.
- Use learning centers, contracts, acceleration, cross-grade work, enrichment, independent study, curriculum compacting and extending, flexible grouping, and tiered assignments as methods for addressing individual learning differences.



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Appendix A: Ohio Javits Grant Abstract

The intent of this Project is to improve methods for identifying and providing services to young (K-3) gifted children who are economically disadvantaged through the development of a replicable inservice training model.

The Project targets five sites in Ohio with exceptionally large populations of economically disadvantaged students: three urban sites (Youngstown City, Akron City, and Toledo City schools), one urban/Appalachian site (Cincinnati City Schools), and one Appalachian site (Alexander Local Schools, Federal Hocking Local Schools, and Nelsonville-York City Schools).

Specifically, the Project will

(a) Increase parents' involvement in their children's education by creating widespread community/parent awareness of the needs and characteristics of young gifted children;

(b) Provide inservice training to elementary teaching staff in improving individualized instruction within the regular classroom to accommodate young gifted children; and

(c) Provide intensive training over the course of two years to 25 (five buildings within each of the five sites) principal-led building teams in the identification of and provision of appropriate services to young gifted children who are economically disadvantaged. A parent of a gifted child will be a full member of each team.

Replication of the project model will be facilitated through ongoing dissemination of relevant information and through a national action seminar held for state education agency (SEA) personnel whose primary responsibility lies in the area of gifted education.

This Project targets key components of school restructuring at state and national levels in the areas of (1) achieving significantly higher levels of performance from all students, (2) assuring that every child has an advocate, and (3) empowering school-based staff to play a major role in instructional decision making.

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) is in a unique position to provide the type of leadership and technical assistance needed to support meaningful educational change at the local school district level. ODE can facilitate interagency collaboration to improve educational programs for gifted youngsters, creating partnerships between schools and such statewide organizations as the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators, the Ohio Parent and Teacher Association (PTA), and the Ohio Council of Urban League Directors.

Dissemination of best practices on a state and national basis can best be achieved through the SEA. Equally important, this Project will strengthen ODE's capacity to establish a regional structure for providing preservice and inservice training programs in the area of gifted education.

Appendix B: Participating Buildings and Sites

Athens Area Schools

Alexander Elementary School
5149 Alton Street
Albany, Ohio 45710

Amesville Elementary School
State Route 329 North
Amesville, Ohio 45711

Coolville Elementary School
Main Street
Coolville, Ohio 45723

Nelsonville Elementary School
Pinegrove Drive
Nelsonville, Ohio 45764

York Elementary School
1 Buckeye Drive
Nelsonville, Ohio 45764

Akron City Schools

Barrett Academy
888 Jonathan Avenue
Akron, Ohio 44306

Erie Island Montesorri School
1532 Peckham Avenue
Akron, Ohio 44320

Glover Elementary School
935 Hammel Street
Akron, Ohio 44306

Harris Elementary School
959 Dayton Street
Akron, Ohio 44310

Stewart Primary School
1199 Wooster Avenue
Akron, Ohio 44307

Cincinnati City Schools

Heberle Elementary School
2015 Freeman Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45214

Roll Hill Elementary School
2411 Baltimore Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45225

Sayler Park Elementary School
6700 Home City Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45233

Silverton Elementary School
6829 Stewart Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45236

South Avondale Elementary School
636 Prospect Place
Cincinnati, Ohio 45229

Toledo City Schools

Cherry Elementary School
3348 Cherry Street
Toledo, Ohio 43608

Fulton Elementary School
333 Melrose Avenue
Toledo, Ohio 43610

Navarre Elementary School
410 Navarre Avenue
Toledo, Ohio 43605

Sherman Elementary School
731 Sherman Street
Toledo, Ohio 43608

Stewart Elementary School
707 Avondale Avenue
Toledo, Ohio 43602

Youngstown City Schools

Cleveland Elementary School
621 West Princeton
Youngstown, Ohio 44511

Harding Primary Elementary School
1903 Cordova
Youngstown, Ohio 44504

John White Elementary School
1061 Lyden Avenue
Youngstown, Ohio 44505

Roosevelt Elementary School
(closed at the end of the 94-95 school year)
1408 Riby Street
Youngstown, Ohio 44506

Williamson Primary Elementary School
58 Williamson Avenue
Youngstown, Ohio 44507

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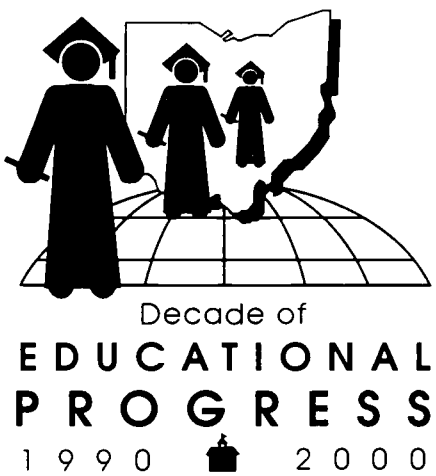

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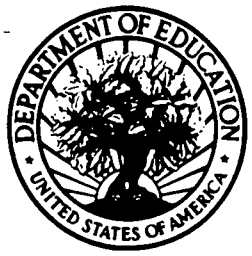

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